

THE NEW COVENANT

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.”
—*JEREMIAH 31:33*

In the beginning, God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness...” (Genesis 1:26). The image God is talking about is His moral character, and we were created for the purpose of displaying His moral character. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments in order to reveal to humanity what He is like, so that we may understand what we are supposed to be like.

But since the law was given, the one word that could be written across the pages of the Old Testament is ‘failure’. The historical books recall the details of that failure. The prophetic books preach about it and the poetic books weep and mourn over it. When we come to the end of the Old Testament, we do not look back and say what a glorious history Israel has had. It is a history of failure, because humanly, it is impossible to keep the Law of God.

In the New Testament, something wonderful happens. Jesus comes on the scene, and the expectancy of the people would have been that He would make the law less demanding or even dispense with some of it. But in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus clearly says, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17). This tells us the New Covenant is not going to involve a revision or rewriting of the law, but a relocating of the law. Until then, it had been written

on tablets of stone. We could stand back, read it and go home feeling utterly condemned, because we cannot keep the commandments. The New Covenant is not a revision of the law, because it is absolute, and reveals the moral character of God which is unchanging.

The nature of the Gospel is about restoring the character of God into human experience. In Ezekiel 36:27, God says, “I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” As a man on earth, Jesus was the exact replication of the moral character of God, and it is His Spirit God imparts to us. What we try so hard to do ourselves in keeping the law become liberating promises with the indwelling Spirit of Christ. The law is expressed by the outworking of an appetite on the inside, which Jesus calls ‘a hunger and thirst for righteousness’. Under the New Covenant, Christ is our enabling, conforming us day by day into what our heavenly Father is like.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank you for giving us Jesus, our only means of expressing your moral character, and fulfilling the purpose for which we were created.

TO REFLECT UPON: How has the indwelling of Christ changed my view of keeping the commandments?